

Thank you, Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young and the members of this subcommittee for your consideration of H.R. 2819, the Gold Star Families Monument Extension Act of 2019.

Later today, you'll hear from Judith Young.

Judith lost her son, Jeffrey, in the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in October of 1983.

Now, Judith will tell more of her personal story, but Judith isn't just here to represent herself.

She's here to represent thousands of loved ones and family members who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.

It's that sacrifice that we seek to honor in the Gold Star Families Monument Extension Act.

By passing this bill, we can give Gold Star Families like Judith's the time they need to complete a monument acknowledging that sacrifices aren't just made by those in uniform, but their loved ones left behind.

This a monument that has a sight selected, that won't cost taxpayers a single dime and that has truly bipartisan support.

If we don't pass this bill, the authorization for this monument will expire in January of next year.

Our Gold Star Families have already been through so much. They have already endured and sacrificed beyond what so many of us here can understand; the least we can do is support them by giving them the time to remember and honor those lost.

The futility in finding the words and actions to thank loved ones like Judith isn't new.

In a letter to Lydia Bixby of Massachusetts in 1864, President Lincoln wrote, "I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming."

Lincoln understood that there is nothing we can do to ever truly repay patriots like Judith. But he continued, "But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save."

Let us show the thanks of the Republic that so many brave men and women have given all to save.

Let us show the thanks of the Republic that so many Gold Star Families have given so much to keep free.

We can do that by passing this bipartisan bill and allowing the completion of this monument.

I hope you'll support me in this effort, and I yield the balance of my time.

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